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SUBJECT: RUSSIAN FM LAVROV MEETING WITH JAPAN FM KOMURA:
MOSCOW CONCERNS REGARDING MISSILE DEFENSE; NO PROGRESS ON
NORTHERN TERRITORIES

REF: A. TOKYO 02690

[1](#)B. TOKYO 04661

Classified By: Ambassador J. Thomas Schieffer. Reasons 1.4 (B) (D)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. Tokyo and Moscow made no progress toward resolving the Northern Territories issue during Russian FM Sergei Lavrov's October 23 visit to Japan, MOFA officials told Embassy Tokyo on October 25. Lavrov expressed concern about U.S.-Japan missile defense cooperation and BMD deployments, which he said encircled Russia and demonstrated that missile defense should be viewed in a global, not regional, context. End Summary.

Bilateral Relations

[1](#)2. (C) On Oct. 25, MOFA Russia Division Principal Deputy Director Kotaro Otsuki briefed Embassy Tokyo on Russian FM Sergei Lavrov's October 23 visit to Tokyo. Lavrov held a 90-minute meeting and hour-long working dinner with FM Masahiko Komura, and paid courtesy calls on Chief Cabinet Secretary Nobutaka Machimura and opposition DPJ Secretary

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General Yukio Hatoyama.

[1](#)3. (C) According to Otsuki, Komura and Lavrov sought to confirm the positive course of Japanese-Russian political dialogue following the recent Cabinet re-shuffles in Tokyo and Moscow. Komura and Lavrov set a November 5-6 date for the visit of Deputy PM Sergei Naryshkin, and December 6 for the third round of the Japan-Russia strategic dialogue between VFM Yachi and DFM Denisov.

No Progress on Northern Territories

¶4. (C) Contradicting media reports of October 25, Otsuki stated that the two sides made no progress toward resolving the Northern Territories (NT) issue, and that neither side offered any new proposals. Drawing on a written summary of the meeting, Otsuki said that Lavrov noted that he did not "intend to freeze the issue," but that it would be "impossible to solve it simply and early." The Russian FM urged Tokyo to solve the dispute by using "patience and looking at reality."

¶5. (C) Komura and Lavrov also discussed:

-- Former NT residents currently living in Japan who want to conduct non-visa visits to the disputed islands using commercial aircraft, rather than the ferry, which takes several hours to cross from Hokkaido to the NT;

-- The immigration status of third-country workers. Some Diet members fear issuance of Russian immigration documents will negatively affect Japan's legal claims on the NT;

-- Plans for the G-8 Hokkaido-Toyako meeting;

-- Efforts to protect sea life and pursue ecological cooperation in the Sea of Okhotsk;

-- Japan's proposal for Cooperation in the Russian Far East and East Siberia (Ref A). MOFA European Affairs Deputy Director-General Keiichi Katakami will attend the October 26 Vladivostok meeting of the sub-committee on economic relations and cultural exchanges trade. (Otsuki said Japan and Russia maintain a second sub-committee on trade and investment); and,

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-- The third round of talks on atomic cooperation, set for November 9-10 in Tokyo (Ref B).

Missile Defense

¶6. (C) Lavrov expressed concern about U.S.-Japan missile defense cooperation, Otsuki noted. U.S. Aegis ships in the Mediterranean Sea, as well as BMD deployments in Japan, Poland, the Czech Republic, UK, Greenland, Alaska and California, demonstrated that the missile defense issue should be viewed in a global, not regional, context. U.S. anti-missile deployments formed a circle that contained Russia - &four-fifths of Russian territory is covered by radar,8 Lavrov stated, according to Otsuki. The Russian FM, citing U.S. assurances that BMD was designed to counter North Korea and Iranian missiles, said that while Pyongyang might present a threat, Iran did not. Lavrov believes that the United States should seek "simpler, cheaper ways to neutralize the threat," Otsuki continued. FM Komura responded that Tokyo's BMD system was not aimed at Russia, and that Japan sought to avoid actions that worsened U.S.-Russian relations.

SCHIEFFER